



A Comparative Study Of Peer-Led Teaching And Student-Led Teaching

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Abstract

This study aims to compare peer-led and teacher-led teaching methods by examining students' preferences, learning experiences, and perceived effectiveness of each approach. Using a descriptive and comparative research design, data were collected from 69 students who had prior exposure to both teaching methods. A structured questionnaire consisting of Likert scale items, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended responses was used to gather insights into concept clarity, engagement, comfort level, and overall learning outcomes.

The findings indicate that students tend to prefer peer-led teaching for theoretical learning due to its informal environment, use of simple language, and increased comfort in asking questions. Peer-led sessions were found to encourage active participation and enhance conceptual understanding. Teacher-led teaching, however, was valued for its structured delivery, accuracy, and suitability for practical and application-based topics. The study, supported by existing literature, suggests that while peer-led teaching has a stronger influence on engagement and conceptual clarity, both methods play essential and complementary roles. An integrated approach combining peer-led and teacher-led teaching is therefore recommended to achieve a balanced and effective learning experience.

Keywords: *Peer-led teaching, Teacher-led teaching, Student learning, Conceptual understanding, Learning preferences, Active learning, Teaching methods.*

1. Introduction

Teaching and learning are not limited to the delivery of content but are deeply influenced by the way knowledge is shared and received in the classroom. As students come from diverse backgrounds and possess different learning styles, a single teaching method may not be equally effective for everyone. This has led educators and researchers to explore alternative instructional approaches that encourage better participation, understanding, and interest among learners.

This study is conducted to compare peer-led teaching and teacher-led teaching among students, with the objective of understanding which method they find more effective and comfortable for learning. The focus is on examining how each approach supports concept clarity, encourages active involvement, and helps students overcome doubts and confusion. The study also seeks to identify students' preferences and

the underlying reasons for their choices, such as ease of communication, relatability, authority of instruction, and classroom interaction.

By closely analyzing both peer-led and teacher-led teaching methods, this research attempts to highlight their strengths and limitations in real classroom settings. The findings aim to provide insights into how these methods influence students' understanding and learning experience, ultimately leading to a well-reasoned conclusion on their effectiveness and suitability in academic environments.

2. Review of literature

(He et al., n.d.) examined how students in the peer-led group achieved higher simulation performance scores than those in the instructor-led group, while both groups showed significant improvement in knowledge with comparable outcomes in performance, satisfaction, and learning confidence.

(L. De Volder et al., 1985) found that students in peer-led discussion groups achieved learning outcomes comparable to those in teacher-led groups. It demonstrated that student-led discussions can be an effective alternative to traditional instructor-led teaching in higher education.

(Allikmets & Vink, 2016) Their findings indicate that peer-led teaching enhances students' learning experience by improving knowledge retention, academic performance, and motivation within a supportive learning environment. Additionally, student tutors develop valuable professional skills such as leadership, communication, and confidence, contributing positively to their future clinical practice.

(Karami et al., 2019) examined that after the educational intervention, the average scores for knowledge, attitude, and practice increased significantly in both groups ($P < 0.05$). However, the improvements in these areas were greater in the peer-led education group than in the teacher-led group.

(Huilaja et al., 2022) study aimed to compare a peer-conducted team-based learning approach with traditional faculty-led seminar teaching. Specifically, it examined students' perceptions of these teaching methods and evaluated both short-term and long-term learning outcomes. Students preferred teaching methods in which they are themselves in an active role.

(Zhang & Maconochie, 2022) examined that peer-assisted learning represents a valuable instructional approach in medical education and is best used alongside, rather than in place of, traditional faculty-led teaching. While a few studies report significant improvements in examination outcomes, most show minimal or no difference, underscoring the need for well-designed randomized controlled trials to clarify the conditions under which this method enhances student learning.

(Bantounou & Kumar, 2023) examined that among 87 participants, 782 feedback forms were collected, and results showed a significant increase in median knowledge scores after each session, rising overall from 5/10 to 8/10, regardless of whether the teaching was peer-led or teacher-led.

(Whittaker et al., 2023) reported that the feedback helped them reflect on their teaching, build confidence, and improve practice, while they appreciated observers for being approachable, relatable, and supportive. Observers said the process enhanced their understanding of effective teaching, although some felt uneasy giving feedback and struggled with issues of credibility and hierarchy.

Pre-existing friendships were seen as both beneficial and challenging in shaping the feedback dynamic.

(Umanah, et al., 2024) Their findings showed that students taught stoichiometry through the peer-led guided inquiry approach performed significantly better than those taught using the teacher-led approach. The results also indicated no significant difference in achievement between male and female students under either teaching method.

(Schlunk et al., 2025) examined how peer-led teacher training significantly improves science education by enabling educators to learn collaboratively from one another. This approach strengthens teachers' confidence, encourages innovative and student-centered teaching practices, and supports the effective use of modern tools. It also builds a strong professional learning community, resulting in more engaging classrooms and improved learning experiences for students.

The reviewed literature collectively indicates that both peer-led and teacher-led teaching methods contribute positively to student learning; however, a consistent trend emerges in favor of peer-led teaching as a more impactful approach in many learning contexts. Several studies highlight that peer-led teaching not only improves academic performance, knowledge retention, and practical skills but also enhances students' confidence, motivation, and engagement. Learners often feel more comfortable asking questions, discussing doubts, and participating actively when guided by peers, which leads to clearer concept understanding and deeper learning.

While teacher-led teaching remains effective in delivering structured content and maintaining academic rigor, evidence suggests that learning outcomes under peer-led methods are comparable or, in many cases, superior. Students frequently express a preference for peer-led environments due to their collaborative nature, relatability, and reduced power distance. Additionally, peer-led approaches foster a supportive learning atmosphere and contribute to the development of essential skills such as communication, leadership, and reflective thinking among student tutors.

Overall, **the findings suggest that peer-led teaching stands out as a preferred and effective method for enhancing conceptual clarity and learning experience among students.** Although teacher-led instruction continues to play an important role, the literature strongly supports the integration and emphasis of peer-led teaching as a central instructional strategy, particularly for promoting active learning and student-centered education.

3. Objectives

1. To assess students' comfort level and perceptions toward peer-led learning in comparison to teacher-led learning.
2. To identify the factors influencing students' preference between peer-led and teacher led learning methods.

4. Research Methodology

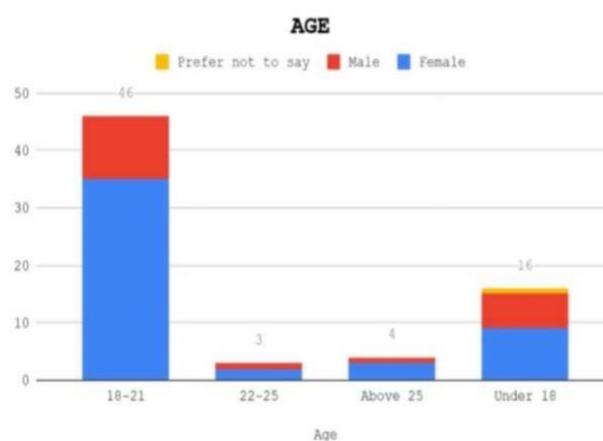
This study adopted a descriptive and comparative research design to examine students' experiences with peer-led and teacher-led teaching methods. A total of 69 students participated in the study, all of whom had prior exposure to both teaching approaches. This ensured that participants were able to provide informed and meaningful comparisons based on their personal learning experiences.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire that included Likert scale items, multiple-choice questions (MCQs), and open-ended questions. The Likert scale was used to measure students' perceptions regarding understanding of concepts, engagement, comfort level, and overall effectiveness of both teaching methods. MCQs helped capture clear preferences and comparative judgments, while open-ended questions allowed students to share detailed experiences, opinions, and reasons behind their choices.

The responses obtained were systematically analyzed to identify patterns, strengths, and limitations associated with each teaching approach. Demographic data revealed that the majority of participants were young adults aged between 18 and 21 years, with a higher representation of female students. This demographic context was considered while interpreting the findings, as it reflects the characteristics of the sample population involved in the study.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Figure No 1 showing age

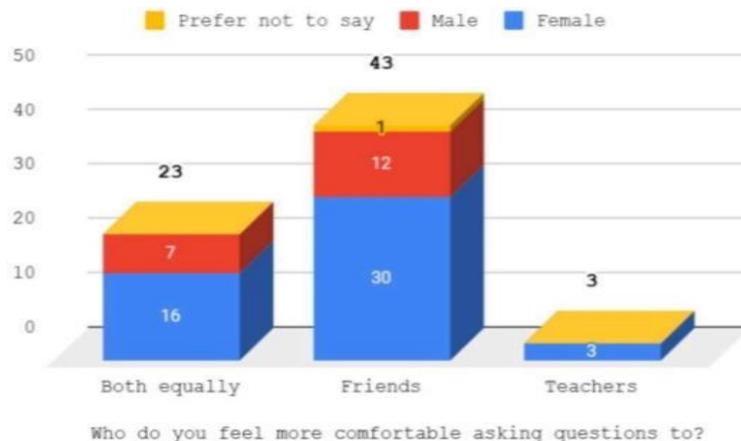


(source – survey form)

The data is collected from 69 responses. The majority of respondents (66.7%) are aged

18–21, followed by 23.2% under 18, while only a small fraction is 22–25 or above 25. Overall, the data is skewed toward younger participants, with females forming the majority across age groups.

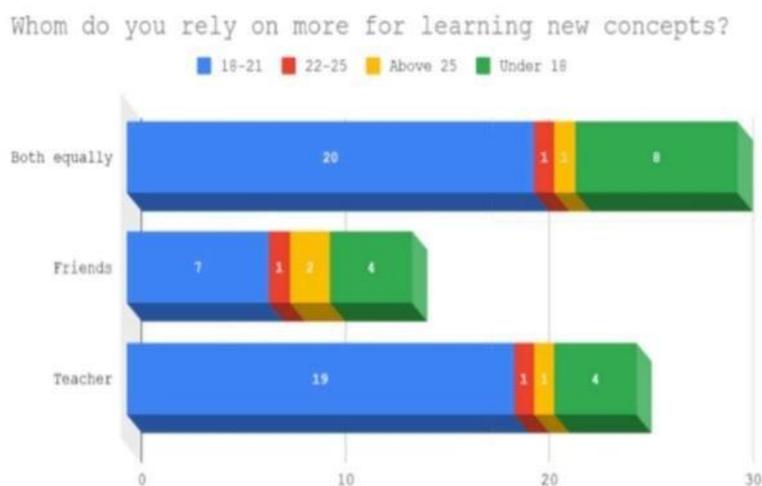
Figure No 2 showing do students feel more comfortable asking questions to?



(source – survey form)

The charts show students’ comfort levels when asking questions. Most students (62.3%) feel more comfortable asking questions to friends, while a smaller portion (33.3%) are equally comfortable with both friends and teachers. Very few students (4.3%) prefer asking teachers directly, indicating a strong peer preference in classroom.

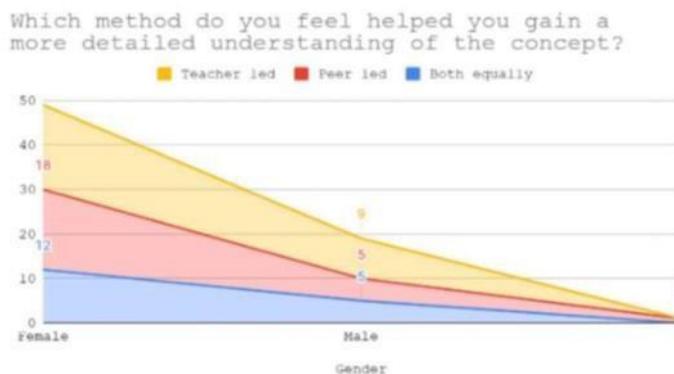
Figure No 3 showing whom do students rely more for learning new concepts?



(source – survey form)

Most respondents rely on both teachers and friends equally for learning new concepts, with the 18–21 age group being the most dominant across all categories. Fewer people rely solely on friends compared to teachers or both.

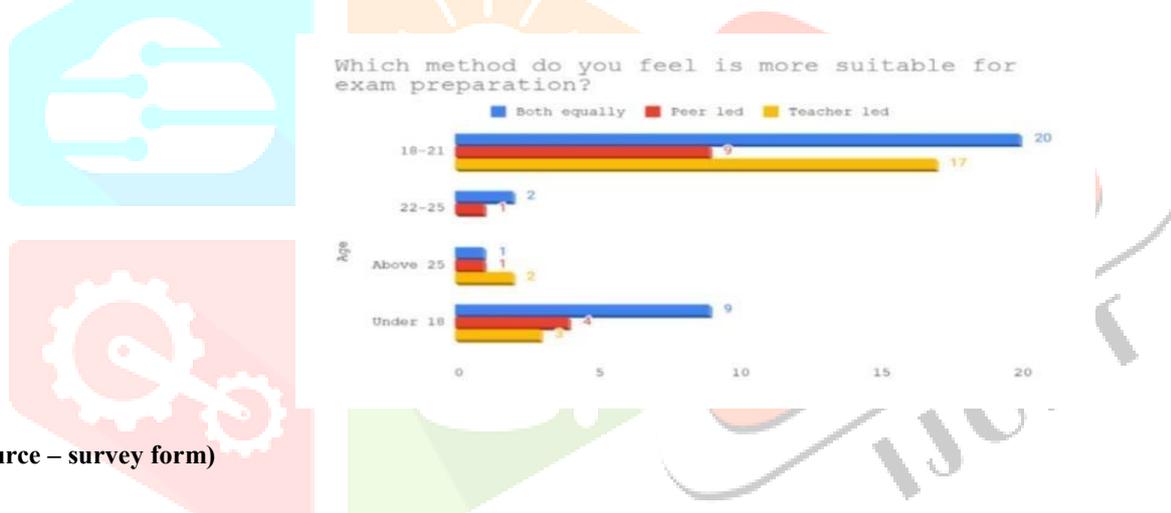
Figure No 4 showing which method do students feel helped them gain a more detailed understanding of the concepts?



(source – survey form)

The chart shows that females found teacher-led methods most helpful in understanding concepts, while males showed a more balanced response across teacher-led, peer-led, and both equally, though teacher-led still had a slight.

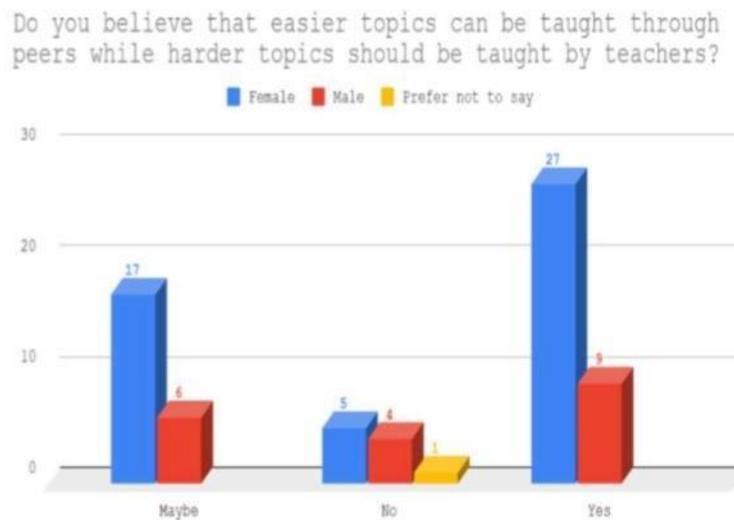
Figure No 5 showing which method do students feel is more suitable for exam preparation?



(source – survey form)

The charts show that most students prefer a balance of both teacher-led and peer-led methods, with females showing the strongest preference for “both equally.” By age, the 18–21 group dominates this trend, favouring a mixed approach, while under-18s lean slightly more toward both equally but with noticeable peer-led preference too.

Figure No 6 showing do students believe that easier topics can be taught through peers, while harder topics should be taught by teachers?



(source – survey form)

Most respondents, especially females, believe that easier topics can be learned from peers while harder ones should be taught by teachers, with fewer people disagreeing.

6. Conclusion –

This study, together with the reviewed literature, provides a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of peer-led and teacher-led teaching methods from both empirical evidence and students' lived experiences. The questionnaire-based findings from 69 participants reveal that students do not view learning as limited to a single instructional approach. Instead, they recognize the distinct strengths offered by both peer-led and teacher-led teaching, depending on the nature of the subject and the learning context.

The **primary study findings show a clear inclination toward peer-led teaching** for theoretical understanding and conceptual clarity. Students consistently reported feeling more comfortable, confident, and willing to participate in peer-led sessions. The use of simple language, relatable examples, and an informal teaching style helped reduce hesitation and fear of judgment, enabling students to ask questions freely. This comfort factor played a crucial role in enhancing engagement and promoting deeper understanding, particularly among younger learners. However, students also acknowledged that peer-led teaching may sometimes lack depth or completeness, highlighting the limitations of relying solely on peers.

In contrast, teacher-led teaching was strongly valued for its structured approach, accuracy, and professional expertise. Students preferred teachers for practical and application-based topics, where systematic explanations, demonstrations, and syllabus coverage ensured clarity and precision. Teachers were perceived as essential for mastering complex concepts and skills, reinforcing the importance of expert guidance in formal education. **These findings suggest that while peer-led teaching supports comprehension and confidence, teacher-led instruction remains critical for academic rigor and comprehensive learning.**

The review of literature supports and strengthens these observations. Multiple studies consistently indicate that peer-led teaching enhances academic performance, knowledge retention, motivation, and learning engagement. Learners often achieve outcomes that are comparable to or better than those in teacher-led settings, particularly in environments that encourage collaboration and active participation. At the same time, existing research emphasizes that teacher-led teaching provides stability, structure, and

depth, making it indispensable for certain learning objectives. The literature further highlights that peer-led approaches are most effective when used alongside, rather than as a replacement for, traditional teaching.

Taken together, both the primary study and the reviewed literature suggest a stronger overall impact of peer-led teaching in fostering student-centered learning, comfort, and conceptual understanding. However, neither method can be considered universally superior. The findings clearly indicate that an integrated teaching approach, combining peer-led and teacher-led methods, offers the most balanced and effective learning experience. By leveraging the strengths of both approaches, educational institutions can better address diverse learning needs, promote active engagement, and ensure both clarity and depth in student learning.

7. References

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